

Inviting Spaces

You may not see anyone else, but you won't be alone. Come share the warm sand with shore birds and watch for wildlife and beautiful flowers along quiet trails.

Canaveral, from a word given by Spanish explorers meaning “place of canes,” is one of the oldest recorded geographical names in North America. Merritt Island is thought to have been named by Pedro Marratt, a surveyor who charted the island in the early 1800’s. But humans left their imprint here long before European explorers ventured ashore. American Indians, attracted by the fertile estuaries and temperate climate, harvested oysters and clams and discarded the shells in heaps that archeologists study today as mounds and middens, such as the mounds at Seminole Rest, Turtle Mound, and Castle Windy. In April 1513, Ponce De Leon’s sailors claimed the land for Spain, and in 1763 the British gained control of Florida’s east coast. But the extensive wetlands, clashes with Seminole Indians, and clouds of

delayed
1830, when
planted an
the Indian River



saltmarsh mosquitoes
development until
Douglas Dummett
orange grove that began
citrus industry.

During the next
citrus groves or
took hold for a
storms, isolation,

century villages near
water passageways
while, then lost out to
or occasional killing

frosts. One town was Eldora, a late 19th-century community built near Mosquito Lagoon. A lone house, Eldora State House, is open to the public. Seminole Rest, site of an ancient Indian mound, dates from about 4,000 to 500 years ago. Archeologists believe that the mound was a place for Timucuan Indians to gather and process clams. Today the mound is 18 feet high. In the early 1900’s pioneer settlers refused to sell the contents of the mound for road construction material, thus preserving the evidence of the Timucuan people. Exhibit panels along the 0.5-mile trail tell more about the history of the mound.

Today this inviting space is yours to enjoy. Relax on a deserted beach or hike through tropical forests of live oaks draped with Spanish moss. If you love being on the water, scout Indian River by pleasure boat, sail, or canoe, and explore Mosquito Lagoon for oysters, clams, pink shrimp, and blue crabs. Whether you seek solace or adventure, the national seashore and the wildlife refuge welcome you.